

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO USMISSION USBERLIN PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GW, WB, US

SUBJECT: PRESS ALLEGATION THAT CHANCELLOR DISCOURAGED
SECRETARY FROM REAFFIRMING BERLIN STATUS

1. THE SENSATIONALIST WEEKLY MAGAZINE "QUICK" PUBLISHES
THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY COLUMNIST ARMIN K. HAAS IN
ITS CURRENT ISSUE:

2. BEGIN TEXT

QUICK COLUMNIST ARMIN K. HAAS REPORTS WHAT IS HAPPENING IN BONN BEHIND THE SCENES.

"THE STRUGGLE OVER BERLIN."

CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IS NOT INTERESTED IN BERLIN. THIS FACT ALSO SURPRISED US SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO GERMANY. UPON ARRIVAL, HE STILL THOUGHT HE COULD STRENGTHEN BONN'S BACK IN THE CONTROVERSY OVER BERLIN'S FOUR-POWER STATUS. EARLIER, KISSINGER HAD HAD A DISCUSSION WITH GROMYKO IN VIENNA DURING WHICH THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER ACTED

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VERY UPSET OVER THE IMPENDING VISIT TO BERLIN BY THE

SECRETARY OF STATE, UNTIL KISSINGER CONCLUDED THE DISCUSSION ON THAT SUBJECT WITH A BLUNT "GO TO HELL."

ON THE EVENING OF THE FIRST DAY OF HIS VISIT IN BONN, KISSINGER TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER, AS WELL AS CDU/CSU FLOOR LEADER CARSTENS: "SO FAR AS CONTINUING FOUR-POWER RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL OF BERLIN IS CONCERNED, I WILL SAY SOME CLEAR WORDS IN PUBLIC TOMORROW." BUT NOTHING CAME OF IT.

THE NEXT MORNING DURING BREAKFAST WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, HE HAD TO REALIZE: BONN IS NOT INTERESTED. KISSINGER DISCLOSED TO ACCOMPANYING MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF DURING THEIR SUBSEQUENT FLIGHT TO BERLIN: "HERR SCHMIDT DOES NOT WANT SUCH A REAFFIRMATION OF THE FOUR-POWER STATUS. SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF IT? IF THE GERMANS THEMSELVES ARE NOT INTERESTED IN MY SUPPORT FOR BERLIN, WHY SHOULD WE AMERICANS BURN OUR FINGERS ON THIS MATTER?" KISSINGER DROPPED THE CLEAR WORDS HE INTENDED TO SAY IN BERLIN. THE SOVIETSINTERPRETED THIS AS WEAKNESS AND INTENSIFIED THE COLD WAR AGAINST BERLIN, AND THE GDR GENTLEMEN IN EAST BERLIN STRONGLY JOINED IN.

LAST WEEK KISSINGER AND GENSCHER MET AGAIN IN PARIS. THEY AGREED ON BERLIN AS MUCH AS EVER. SINCE KISSINGER LIKES TO COMMENT ON DELICATE MATTERS THROUGH THE MOUTHS OF CLOSE COLLABORATORS RATHER THAN DIRECTLY, I LEARNED FROM ONE OF HIS CLOSEST ADVISERS WHAT THE SECRETARY OF STATE REALLY THINKS AND WHAT HE HAS BEEN WONDERING ABOUT: "BERLIN AS A WHOLE IS UNDER FOUR-POWER RESPONSIBILITY. BUT WHY IS CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT SHOWING SO LITTLE ENGAGEMENT FOR BERLIN?" END TEXT.

3. COMMENT AND ACTION REQUESTED: THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO INQUIRIES ABOUT THE ARTICLE, NOR DID THE SUBJECT ARISE AT THE FRG NOON PRESS BRIEFING JUNE 6. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, ACCURACY IS NOT ONE OF THE STRONG POINTS OF "QUICK." IT IS, HOWEVER, WIDELY READ, WITH THE SECOND LARGEST CIRCULATION OF WEST GERMANY'S WEEKLY ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINES. AS THIS ARTICLE SUGGESTS, IT IS PRO-CDU, TAKING A CONSERVATIVE LINE ON MATTERS RELATED TO BERLIN, NATO AND DETENTE. THE HAAS PIECE HAS BEEN REPLAYED IN THE BERLIN PRESS (SEE SEPA-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RATE USBERLIN TELEGRAM), AND WE OR MISSION MAY THUS BE ASKED FOR COMMENT. UNLESS DEPARTMENT OBJECTS, WE PROPOSE IF ASKED TO RESPOND ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: "AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE WE NEVER COMMENT ON PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS OF THIS NATURE. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRG AND OURSELVES OVER THE FOUR-POWER STATUS OF BERLIN. OUR JOINTLY-HELD VIEW WAS MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED IN THE

STATEMENT ISSUED FOLLOWING A MEETING OF THE FOREIGN
MINISTERS OF THE US, THE FRG, FRANCE, AND THE UK IN
PARIS ON MAY 28." HILLENBRAND

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